United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Eight more UNOMIL military observers freed in Liberia, leaving ten unaccounted for; United Nations evacuates some staff from Monrovia.

* Secretary-General travels from Beijing to Shanghai; to conclude China visit and depart for Tokyo tomorrow.

* Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) closes five border crossings used by UNHCR convoys bound for Bosnian enclaves; NATO agrees to extend close air support into part of Croatia bordering Bihac pocket.

* WFP to supply 100,000 metric tons of food aid to 1.3 million Iraqis over next six months; expands emergency assistance to 500,000 people in Republic of Georgia.

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All but 10 of the 43 United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) military observers detained last week have now been accounted for and are out of the country. A United Nations spokesman said two observers were being held in Ganta, while the remaining eight were in Tapetta. He said the Organization had no information on their condition and was very concerned about them.

Meanwhile, six non-governmental organization aid workers were being protected by the Military Observer Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOMOG) in a camp between Cacata and Monrovia. The United Nations has evacuated some of its staff from Liberia as a safety measure, leaving 19 in the capital city.

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Nearing the end of his visit to the People's Republic of China, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today travelled from Beijing to Shanghai. He visited the Pudong area -- a high-technology enterprise zone established with the participation of the World Bank -- and met with the Mayor of Shanghai, Huang Ju, who hosted a dinner in his honour.

(more)

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Tomorrow, the Secretary-General will have discussions with Chinese intellectuals and other individuals interested in foreign policy. He will then leave China for an overnight stay in Tokyo, and will return to New York the following day.

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The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) has closed five of the six border crossings into Bosnia and Herzegovina used by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), according to a spokesman for the Organization. The UNHCR had formally protested to the Federal Republic about the obstruction of convoys bound for the Bosnian enclaves.

Meanwhile, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has informed the Secretary-General that it has agreed to extend close air support into the region of Croatia bordering the Bihac pocket.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has announced that it will supply more than 100,000 metric tons of food to 1.3 million people seriously affected by food shortages in Iraq. Half of the food needed has already been pledged by the United States, Germany and Sweden, and the WFP has urged donors to meet the shortfall and accelerate food deliveries to avert further suffering. It has also appealed for a total of $33.6 million to cover the cost of the six-month operation.

Living conditions for most of the Iraqi civilian population have been extremely precarious since the Persian Gulf war. Prices of basic food commodities have more than tripled in the last two years and are beyond the reach of the poor. Malnutrition has increased, particularly among women and children. Between March 1991 and June 1994, the WFP delivered about 290,000 tonnes of food to vulnerable groups, internally displaced and destitute people throughout Iraq.

Meanwhile, the WFP has expanded its emergency assistance to the Republic of Georgia to feed almost 500,000 people suffering as a result of civil strife, political instability and economic upheaval. It will provide more than 41,000 tons of food to people at risk of malnutrition and even starvation, at a cost of $21 million.

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